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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - EUROPEAN ISSUES - BLAIR  
SPEECH IN BRUSSELS IRAN ELECTIONS UN REFORM - G4 FRENCH - U.S.  
RELATIONS  
PARIS - FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

1. EUROPEAN ISSUES - BLAIR SPEECH IN BRUSSELS
2. IRAN ELECTIONS
3. UN REFORM - G4
4. FRENCH - U.S. RELATIONS

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

A MAJORITY OF TODAY'S FRONT-PAGES AND EDITORIALS ARE DEVOTED TO TONY BLAIR AND HIS "CHARM OFFENSIVE" (LE FIGARO) IN BRUSSELS AS HE PRESENTED HIS PROGRAM BEFORE TAKING OVER THE EU PRESIDENCY ON JULY 1ST. CATHOLIC LA CROIX HEADLINES: "EUROPE, BRITISH STYLE;" LA TRIBUNE TITLES "TONY BLAIR PRESENTS HIS PLAN 'B'" AND COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE HEADLINES "BLAIR THE LIBERAL STICKS TO HIS GUNS." LE MONDE LAST EVENING HEADLINED: "BLAIR WANTS TO 'MODERNIZE THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL'" QUOTING THE BRITISH PM FROM AN INSIDE-PAGE INTERVIEW: "I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AN IMPASSIONED EUROPEAN. WE ARE READY TO DISCUSS THE REBATE BUT WITHIN A WIDER DISCUSSION ON THE BUDGET. THE PRESENT BUDGET DOES NOT MEET THE NEEDS FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH. IT IS IMPORTANT TO EXPLAIN TO THE FRENCH THAT I AM NOT ASKING FOR THE PAC TO BE CHANGED. I SAY ONLY THERE MUST BE A COMPLETE OVERHAULING OF THE BUDGET. WHAT I DO NOT ACCEPT IS BEING CALLED ANTI-EUROPEAN OR A 'BAD EUROPEAN.' REGARDING EU EXPANSION, WE MUST EMPHASIZE ITS ADVANTAGES. WE WILL NOT SOLVE EUROPE'S PROBLEMS BY PUTTING A STOP TO ITS EXPANSION, BUT BY MODERNIZING OUR ECONOMIES. I AM NOT A EURO-SKEPTIC. THERE IS A HUGE MISUNDERSTANDING OVER WHAT WE DO, OVER THE SO-CALLED ANGLO-SAXON MODEL. THERE ARE PRESENTLY TWO VISIONS OF EUROPE'S FUTURE. WHAT SETS THEM APART IS NOT FREE TRADE OR EURO-SKEPTICISM, IT IS MODERNIZATION. THIS IS A CHALLENGE FOR EUROPE AS WELL AS FOR INDIVIDUAL NATIONS. IT IS TIME FOR EUROPE TO MODERNIZE ITS SOCIAL MODEL AND TO RE-DISCOVER THE CONCERNS OF ITS PEOPLE."

A VAST NUMBER OF EDITORIALS ANALYZE BLAIR'S PERFORMANCE AS WELL AS HIS MESSAGE. SOME SEE HIM AS HIS "MAJESTY'S SUBJECT; A JAMES BOND ON A MISSION IMPOSSIBLE" (LE FIGARO), WHILE OTHERS AGREE WITH BLAIR THAT THE BUDGET NEEDS TO BE REVAMPED TO FAVOR RESEARCH. (SEE PART C)

OTHER STORIES COVERED ARE THE RUN-OFF ELECTION IN IRAN (SEE PART C), THE UN G-4 AND UN REFORMS, (SEE PART C) AND THE PRELIMINARY G-8 MEETINGS, WITH EMPHASIS ON STATEMENTS MADE ON THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AND THE ROADMAP, AND ON THE WARNING TO SYRIA. WHILE LE FIGARO TITLES ITS REPORT: "THE G-8 SUPPORTS ISRAELI PULLOUT," LIBERATION COMMENTS: "THE WEST CALLS SYRIA TO ORDER." SECRETARY RICE IS QUOTED EXTENSIVELY, AS IS FRENCH FM DOUSTE-BLAZY. THE ARTICLE EMPHASIZES THEIR SHARED POSITION ON THIS ISSUE, AS DOES LE PARISIEN, WHICH REPORTS ON THEIR BREAKFAST TETE-A-TETE. DOUSTE-BLAZY IS SAID TO HAVE REITERATED TO SECRETARY RICE, "WHOM HE ALREADY CALLS 'CONDI,' 'FRANCE'S FRIENDSHIP FOR THE U.S.'"

IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO COMMENTATOR IVAN RIOUFOL WRITES ABOUT TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS. (SEE PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

EUROPEAN ISSUES - BLAIR SPEECH IN BRUSSELS

"MISSION IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIS MAJESTY'S PM"  
ALEXANDRINE BOUILHET IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/24):  
"BLAIR'S SPEECH WAS SALUTED BY ONE AND ALL. BUT HIS MISSION, TO WAKE UP EUROPE, TO MODERNIZE IT AND OPEN ITS EYES TO INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION WILL BE DIFFICULT. HIS ADVERSARIES ARE SCHROEDER AND CHIRAC. AND IN THIS REMAKE OF 'JAMES BOND AGAINST DR NO, WITH CHIRAC IN THE ROLE OF NO, 007 HAS MORE THAN ONE ALLY. EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, PLUS ITALY, SPAIN AND IRELAND. BUT WITH ONLY SIX MONTHS, HIS AMBITIOUS MISSION REMAINS IMPOSSIBLE. THE WAR ON THE BUDGET HAS LEFT DEEP SCARS AND A POLITICAL AGREEMENT SEEMS OUT OF REACH BY DECEMBER. MEANWHILE, ANGELA MERKEL, ALTHOUGH SHE DOES NOT LOOK ANYTHING LIKE A JAMES BOND GIRL, COULD WELL PLAY THE ROLE OF A STRATEGIC ALLY."

#### "THE PASSIONS OF TONY BLAIR"

GUILLAUME GOUBERT IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (06/24): "BLAIR IS PASSIONATELY EUROPEAN. HE IS ALSO PASSIONATELY BRITISH. HIS POSITION, BOTH AS A EURO-PHILE AND A SOCIAL-LIBERAL IS NOT ONLY A MATTER OF STRATEGY. BLAIR BELIEVES IN IT. HE COULD ENROLL OTHERS, SUCH AS THE GERMAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, IF THEY COME TO POWER NEXT FALL. IF FRANCE DOES NOT WANT TO BE ISOLATED AND CUT OFF FROM ITS GERMAN PARTNER, IT WILL HAVE TO BE IMAGINATIVE. IT COULD PROPOSE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A JOINT RESEARCH POLICY."

#### "MODERN EUROPE"

LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE IN ITS EDITORIAL (06/24): "BLAIR IS RIGHT TO BEMOAN THE FACT THAT THE EU BUDGET IS NOT DEALING WITH 'MAJOR ISSUES.' HE IS RIGHT TO SAY THAT EUROPE'S ECONOMY IS NOT INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE. BUT HE IS NOT TOTALLY RIGHT TO OPPOSE THIS 'MODERN EUROPE' TO YESTERDAY'S 'AGRICULTURAL' EUROPE. WHAT BLAIR DOESN'T DO IS PROPOSE A JOINT RESEARCH POLICY. IN SHORT HE IS ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS BUT WITH THE WRONG WORDS. THE RIGHT TERMS WOULD BE TO SAY THAT THE EUROPEAN BUDGET IS INSUFFICIENT. BUT BLAIR'S POSITION ON THE NEED TO INCREASE RESEARCH MEANS IS SOLID. THE EU-25 NEED TO GET BACK TO THE FUTURE, IN SHORT THEY NEED TO FIND ONCE AGAIN THE MEANING OF COMPROMISE."

#### "HANDICAPS AND DOUBTS"

PASCAL AUBERT IN CENTRIST LA TRIBUNE (06/24): "TONY THE 'EUROPEAN' IS STICKING TO HIS MISSION OF MODERNIZING EUROPE. BUT BLAIR'S PLAN SUFFERS FROM TWO MAJOR HANDICAPS AND SUSPICION. THE FIRST HANDICAP TOUCHES ON THE METHOD HE HAS CHOSEN: PLAYING ON THE EU CRISIS TO REACH HIS OBJECTIVES. THE SECOND HANDICAP TOUCHES ON HIS - VOLUNTARILY? - UNFINISHED PLAN. HIS PROCLAIMED EUROPEAN FLAME AND HIS REJECTION OF EUROPE AS AN OPEN MARKET ARE NOT ENOUGH TO HIDE THE IMBALANCED NATURE OF HIS PLANS. HE CLEARLY FAVORS AN ECONOMIC VISION AND THE POLITICAL IS JUST A MEANS TO AN END. THE SUSPICION OF THE 'CONTINENTALS' RESIDES IN DOUBTS ABOUT BLAIR'S SINCERITY IN HIS EUROPEAN COMMITMENT."

#### IRAN ELECTIONS

##### "IRANIANS TO REFEREE ISLAMIC DUEL"

GEORGES MALBRUNOT IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/24): "IRANIANS WILL BE VOTING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO MEN WITH DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED PROGRAMS AND PERSONALITIES. THE FUTURE OF IRAN'S REFORMS AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE WEST WILL DEPEND ON THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION, WHICH IS SAID TO BE VERY CLOSE. IF THE TURNOUT IS MASSIVE, AS IN THE FIRST ROUND, RAFSANJANI COULD TAKE THE LEAD. REFORMERS AND INTELLECTUALS HAVE PUT THEIR DIFFERENCES ASIDE IN ORDER TO COUNTER THE MAYOR OF TEHRAN. HIS INTRANSIGENCE AND HIS POPULIST STANCE ARE NOT GOOD OMENS FOR IRAN JUST WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS LOOKING FOR TOKENS ON ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM. BUT FEAR IS GREAT IN PUBLIC OPINION BECAUSE OF RUMORS THAT THE FIRST ROUND WAS RIGGED IN FAVOR OF TEHRAN'S MAYOR."

#### UN REFORM - G4

##### "UN REFORM TURNING SOUR"

ALAIN BARLUET IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/24): "THE PROSPECT FOR UN REFORM HAS DARKENED FOR LACK OF A CONSENSUS. THE U.S. HAS JUST REVEALED ITS PREFERENCE REGARDING THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE UNSC . AND ITS OPEN SUPPORT FOR JAPAN'S CANDIDACY. A CHOICE THAT CHINA STRONGLY OPPOSES. LULA'S BRAZIL DOES NOT ENJOY WASHINGTON'S FAVORS, AND NEITHER DOES GERMANY, FOR HAVING SIDED WITH THE SIDE OF PEACE OVER IRAQ. THE IMPOSSIBLE CONSENSUS COULD BE FATAL TO THE REFORM. WHILE SOME COUNTRIES COULD BE TEMPTED TO SUPPORT THIS STALEMATE, OTHERS FEAR IT, BECAUSE AS A FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID: 'WE NEED TO MOVE TO OTHER THINGS.'"

#### FRENCH - U.S. RELATIONS

##### "QUESTIONS ON THE U.S."

IVAN RIOUFOL IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/24): "IN THE SERIES 'LET'S BE FRANK,' TONY BLAIR RECENTLY SUGGESTED EUROPE THINK ABOUT WHAT RELATIONS IT NEEDS TO ENTERTAIN WITH THE U.S. FRANCE'S ANTI-AMERICANISM, ANTI-LIBERALISM AND PACIFISM. HAVE MADE THIS A HOT TOPIC. THE FRENCH AND A MAJORITY OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION SUPPORTED CHIRAC AND SCHROEDER IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO BUSH AND BLAIR OVER IRAQ. PARIS HAS ABDICATED BEFORE TOTALITARIANISM IN IRAQ AND HAS BEEN ABSENT FROM THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS THAT HAS DEVELOPED IN SPITE OF TERRORISM. CONVERSELY, IN THE NAME OF ITS PRO-ARAB POLICY, ITS TIES WITH DESPOTS HAVE BEEN CONSOLIDATED. HAS THIS 'SOFT POWER' STRENGTHENED FRANCE? THE HUMILIATION SUFFERED BY FRANCE IN IRAQ WHERE JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN HELD HOSTAGE HAS COOLED THE IMAGE OF RESPECTABILITY WHICH FRANCE ACQUIRED IN THE ARAB-MUSLIM WORLD. IN SHORT, FRANCE'S POSITION AGAINST THE U.S. IS NOT AS INDISPUTABLE AS POLITICIANS AND THE MEDIA CLAIM IT TO BE. CHIRAC HAD STRONG ARGUMENTS AGAINST BUSH. BUT ONE MIGHT WONDER IF THE NATION THAT SAW THE BIRTH OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS GIVING ENOUGH SUPPORT TO THE FRAGILE SIDE OF DEMOCRACIES, WHICH HAVE BECOME THE TARGET OF FUNDAMENTALIST IDEOLOGY. ARE THE AMERICANS REALLY OUR ADVERSARIES?" WOLFF